

# MAN EATER CULTS



BESTIARUM  
— miniatures —





# MAN EATER CULTS

**M**an Eater Tribes have been spreading across Doaden since the World Tree fell. The plagues of desperation and hunger that followed the great calamity has led more and more of the common folk to feast upon their own.

If these folk are not found out quick and strung from the village gallows, they will soon leave town of their own accord, disappearing in the night, never to be seen again.

**D**irect reporting is confined to a few scant ravings from those scouts lucky enough to escape a sighting, but what is assumed is that many Man Eater tribes are present across the realm, for bone totems have been found in the centre of razed towns many leagues apart, within mere days of each other.

**W**hat can be known for certain is that they are cannibals who sweep across the realm of Doaden like a plague of locusts, but instead of crops, the cult will pick the land clean of human life.

Strangely, livestock, crops or valuables are often left untouched in the ashes, for the Man Eaters are uninterested in such things, they only deal in the Fleshspoil.





What drives these once-men to such depravity is not clearly understood, for hunger and desperation alone is not enough to justify the overt corruption of the Man Eaters.

From their apparent ritualistic behaviour some scholars posit that the Cannibal tribes worship some kind of godhead or aspect of their hunger.

While its true name is unknown, whispers have fed back to the cities of a 'Carrion King', a great and hungry being that must lie deeper in the woods, bound to the place where the tribes are first formed.

The Man Eaters are desperate souls, worthy of pity were it not for their feral deeds, but in the call of the Carrion King, they find a new family who offer acceptance of their shame.

Drawn together, their great roving hunting parties descend from the forests without warning upon unsuspecting towns and villages.

They leave naught but ruin and silence in their wake.





*It is well known amongst the village folk of the realm that one should not eat the flesh of a predator, for by virtue of their position at the top of the food chain, they become a locus of all the taint that pervades the lesser creatures of Doaden.*

*Some Scholars and learned folk would argue that this applies equally to man, though it is fair to say in the face of the realms greater horrors that we are not top of the food chain.*

*Apex predator or no, our species is certainly a cesspit for all the realm's corruption, filth and ill-thought, and such humours make our flesh sour.*

*No wonder then, that those twisted, perverse or desperate enough to cross the precipice and feast upon the flesh of their own kind find their souls warped, and that 'decent' society no longer holds a place for them.*

*Those poor souls who slide into such degeneracy find themselves drawn into the forests and wild places of Doaden.*

*Something within calls to them, whether it be a spiritual being, or their own primal desire for community few can say for certain.*

*One thing though is clear, those who feast upon the flesh of their own kind do find a new purpose and home within the woods, amongst the Man Eaters.*

- From the Journal of Dreyen Solius, Chronicler of the Realm's Ending.





## THE HARUSPEX

Spiritual leaders of the tribe, the Haruspex are the ones who hear the call of the Carrion King most clearly.

They interpret these cryptic whispers into commands for the tribe, augmenting their understanding through foul.

Anthropomancy, gutting their captives upon rough altars and reading dark futures in how the entrails fall.

## OFFALSCRYERS

Apprentices and attendants to the tribe's Haruspex, it is the Offalscryers who meticulously organise the tools of the less fastidious Haruspex's trade, and take away leavings from greater rituals to foretell smaller, more personal omens for the tribe's members.

While the Haruspex serves as the figurehead of the Carrion King's influence, it is often the tribe's Offalscryer who the Wicked look to for guidance.







## THE WICKED

The Wicked encompass the foul masses of a Man Eater hunting party.

Since the corruption of the world tree, many across the land have been made desperate enough by their hunger to commit the act of cannibalism and have heard the hungry call of the Carrion King.

These initiates range amongst the greater warriors of the raiding party, cracking skulls and stabbing with wild abandon.

Their frenzy often leaves them blind to the complex hierarchies of the tribe, and one mistaken mouthful is liable to make the Wicked themselves a meal for one of their betters.

## PREYCATCHERS

With so much of their strength found in the element of surprise, it is critical that word of the Man Eater's arrival does not reach the village before they have camped their cooking pits and butchers blocks deeper in the forest.

It is the prey catchers who play the role of vanguard.

They are fast and agile enough to range ahead of even the swiftest of quarries and cut them down, ensuring that any who chance upon the







## MANHOUNDS

The old adage 'you are what you eat' can be seen in clear effect when confronted with the Man Hounds.

Competition within the tribe for the choicest cuts is fierce, and some of the weaker Wicked are left to persist on morsels and scraps of the foulest Fleshspoil - intestine, bowel and worse.

This diet drives the once-men mad, or at least madder than the rest of their kind.

They become akin to beasts, bounding about raiding parties upon all fours, desperate for scraps.

Some amongst the Wicked might take a Man hound or three under their charge, aping the hunting parties of Doaden's Nobility in twisted parody.

## MAN SWINE

Like the rest of the Man Eaters, the Man Swine began their sorry existence as regular human folk.

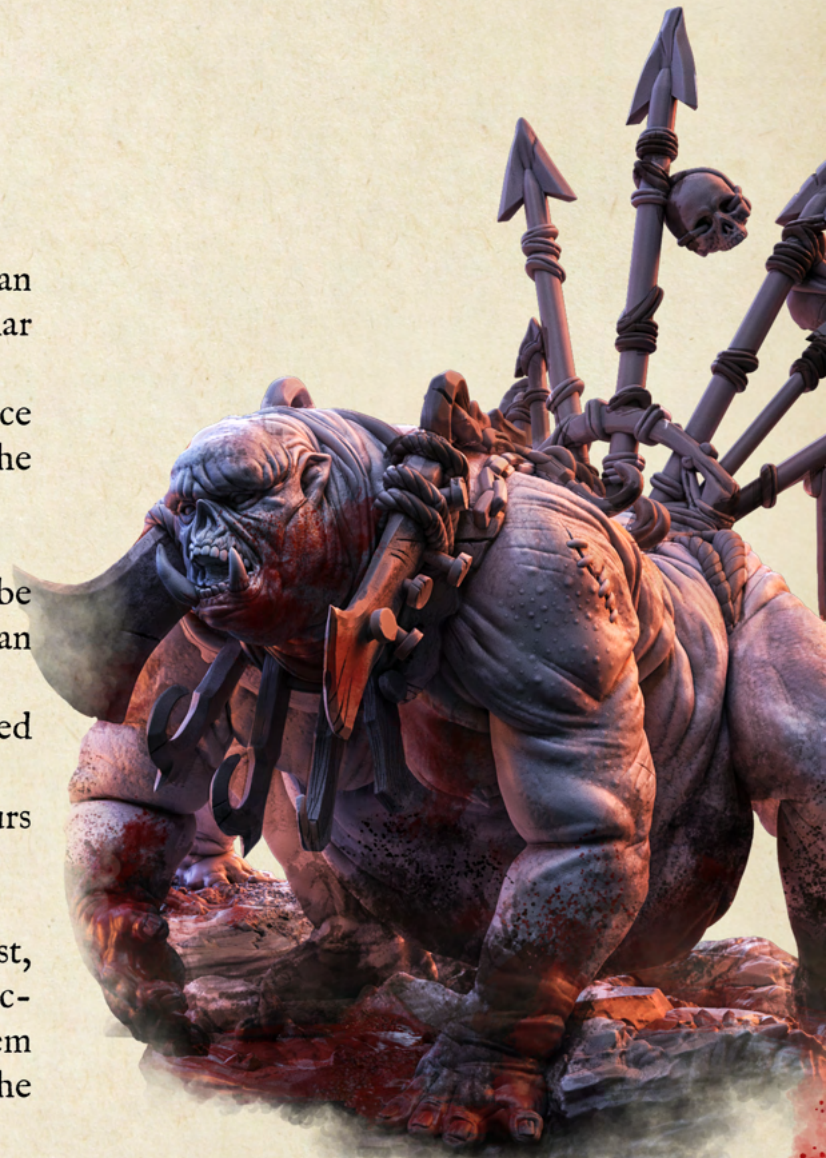
They are a far cry from the what they once were, maddened and engorged by years of the Fleshspoil.

Fecund and swollen, the Man Swine can be considered a subset of the more agile Man Hounds.

As with their smaller kin, they are deranged and twisted shadows of the human form.

Fat with Fleshspoil, they trot upon all fours with swollen guts hanging close to ground.

Though none would call the Man Swine fast, they have a boundless stamina that in conjunction with their quadrupedal gait makes them valuable mounts and beasts of burden for the tribe's less physically corrupt members.





## LARDERMEN

Sometimes, a Man Swine will stand out amongst the rest of it's drove.

Greater size or a more vicious aspect will mark it out amongst it's kin as a beast of note.

They will barge aside other Man Swine and take their first pick of the tribe's foul leavings, over time, this precipitates prodigious growth and a greater change in aspect, their rabid hunger grows and whatever traces of intelligence remain take leave.

What remains is only the instinct to feast and gorge.

They are utterly untameable and inured to pain, making them difficult to control.

As such, the Wicked have little option but to lure the beasts with their desire for human flesh, dangling whole victims in their eyeline to keep them on track.

The Lardermen serve as pack beasts and transports for Man Eater hunting parties.

Trailing far behind the roving Prey Catchers, they are not subtle mounts.

Many a village's first warning of the tribe's arrival is the disappearance of scouts and guards, followed no more than a day later by the hungry groaning of the Larderbeasts echoing through the forests.





## GIANT FLESHGLUTTONS

The Giants of Doaden are no strangers to the taste of manflesh, the great beasts' lairs are often littered with the bones of peasantfolk and wayward adventurers.

It is no surprise then that some fall in with the Hungerer raiding parties, as even their slow, cruel minds can fathom the greater spoils to be gained from falling in the degenerate tribes rather than feasting upon them.

Though understanding of the metaphysical is beyond them, the whispers of the Carrion King have a demonstrable effect upon these Giants, the longer they spend amongst the tribe the more their bodies corrupt and change like their diminutive companions.





## THE FLESHSPOIL

Piles of Human Corpses, the Man Eaters will drive their victims into herds before the butchery commences.

Bodies are brutalised and limbs hacked away. Most horrifying of all though, is that the Man Eaters care little for killing their prey, and often the Fleshspoil will twitch with the anguish and cries of the yet-living.



## BONE TOTEMS

Often the only trace left by the Hungerers, beyond of course silent devastation, bone totems are raised from the freshly picked bones of the tribe's victims..





# THE HUNGER

*'Ghoul!'*

*'Degenerate!'*

*'We will gut you when we catch you and leave you to the birds!'*

*The shouts of the villagers rang out from behind Halleck as he bolted into the tree line, away from the dim light cast by the torches of his pursuers.*

*The curses followed him into the dense forest, he ran harder. His clothes and flesh snagging and tearing on the thick brambles he barrelled through to escape that light, and his once-family that carried it.*

*He ran hard, and the lights and shouts followed. Though his rational thought had been pushed down to give room for the primal instinct to escape, some dim part of his hind-brain cried out for him to stop and turn back, for all his life he had been told the forests were a dangerous place.*

*For Halleck though, the forest was now his only chance, he was no longer welcome amongst his old family.*

*T*hen,

*The blight had fallen upon the village a year prior. A single ear of corn, its pristine exterior gave way to dark, rotten centre that smelled of death. Edren, the village elder had called for calm, and that the crop be put to the torch before the blight spread to the other fields.*

*Though the crop was burnt to the earth, doomsayers amongst the village told that this was not over, and that this blight was only the beginning.*

*They said the World Tree had been corrupted and the land itself had been poisoned.*

*The loudest among them were quietly put to the sword to prevent terror from overtaking the general populace.*

*Burning the corn did nothing to forestall the blight.*

*Shortly after it spread to the marrow-crop, then the vines and then out from there to the whole seasons produce.*

*Rationing of the meagre food stores was enforced, but all knew there was not enough to last the winter season.*

...



*A*fter the fear, the hunger truly set in.  
The folk were tired, lethargic and weakened.  
And as the cold deepened, true desperation formed in the hearts of the people.

*It was from this desperation that Halleck's crime had been born.*

*His neighbours child, still so much plumper and fatter than the rest, thanks in no small part to how well the doting parents had fed him, had come to his door begging for a morsel.*

*H*alleck had none.  
Halleck was hungry, so very hungry.

*N*ow,

*The pursuing torchlight had guttered out suddenly some time back., the sheer dark and nightcall of the forest was cloying and panicking Halleck.  
Yet still, he ran on, deeper into the wilderness.*

*A*nd amongst that darkness, he saw another light, a ways to his left.

*He stopped, his laboured breathing would have been loud enough to alert half the forests denizens were it not for the Drums.*

*T*he Drums were loud and rhythmic, a deep bass 'Thwock, Thwock, Thwock', seasoned with a sharp 'Clock, Clock, Clock'.  
The sound was enthralling despite it's tribal barbarism.  
It spoke to Halleck, it called to him from the pit of his stomach.

*He went closer.*

*A*s he drew near, he could hear screams and wails underneath the drum beat.  
Sounds that he could have mistaken for livestock in the slaughterhouse, were it not for the fact that Halleck knew those voices, for they had once been his friends, his neighbours, his pursuers.

*As Halleck entered the fire lit clearing, and orgy of horror and slaughter confronted him.  
His pursuers, caged, or hung on meathooks around a great camp kitchen.*

...



*Surrounding them, either playing drums or attending to the myriad cook fires, pots and saucepans stood Men and Women, or what Halleck surmised had once been Men and Women.*

*They were clad in human bones.*

*Barbin, one of Halleck's pursuers and the village's Butcher, was dragged, screaming from the cage by one of the savage folk, towards a great stone butchers block at the centre of the impromptu cook site.*

*A Shaman stood there, presumably more important than the rest of the monstrous folk by virtue of her sparse raiment carrying more bones than the rest.*

*Barbin was lain down on the table, and gutted.*

*There was no fanfare, no chanting or pause. Barbin was gutted, quickly and efficiently like the pigs he had slaughtered behind his butcher shop.*

*The Shaman placed her hand into Barbin's chest cavity, ignoring his pitiful wails. Stopping once she had found her prize, she tugged out swiftly, removing the butcher's heart.*

*She looked up at Halleck, who, much to his own bemusement, had walked wholly into the centre of the cook site, unmolested by the attendants or guards.*

*The Shaman held out her hand, Barbin's heart uttered a final shuddering beat before going still in it.*

*Halleck stumbled forward, he took the heart in his trembling hands.*

*The drum beat grew in pace.*

*And he ate it.*







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